

FTF 2009 COUNCIL MEMBER SURVEY

SUMMARY OF OPEN ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES

Below is a summary of the written responses to the RPC member survey. There were 7 open ended questions. At least 80 written comments were received to each question, with some questions receiving over 100 responses. An independent person reviewed the comments, noted the major points of respondents and summarized the results as shown below.

26. How has your Regional Council functioned: What has worked best?

- Councils work well together and form cohesive teams
- Councils have a clear direction and function well to achieve goals
- Council members are accessible and create an atmosphere of respect and open communication
- The council represents diversity, which is a plus because they bring varied experiences which are valuable to the overall mission of the agency
- Council members represent great leadership and are committed to the children of Arizona
- Decisions made have impacted children positively

Consensus: *After reviewing all the responses to the above question, respondents overall felt that councils work cohesively. The diverse members create a welcoming environment and are effective due to the varied experiences of members. The council chairs and vice chairs exhibit great leadership skills and perform well under challenging situations.*

27. How has your Regional Council functioned? What has been the biggest challenge?

- The entire RFGA process, from deciding how to vote and understanding the relationship between strategies and the scope of work, to the application process for applicants.
- Deciding on meeting times, locations, and establishing quorums. Council members often are absent and determining a length of time for meetings has been a challenge.

- Understanding and abiding by conflict of interest rules.
- Open meeting law guidelines are difficult to follow and confusing.
- Timelines are rushed. Not given enough time to meet objectives and finish goals defined by the FTF Board.
- Budget issues; disseminating funds expediently and properly, determining the amount of funds needed for specific regions, and waiting time for budget results.
- Ineffective needs and assets process.
- Lack of information provided on other FTF divisional activities such as projects, goals, and collaboration efforts among regions staff and divisions such as Policy and Finance.

Consensus: *Respondents overall believe the biggest challenges are with rushed timelines, the RFGA process, obtaining meeting quorums, open meeting laws and conflict of interest requirements.*

28. What has made it possible for your Regional Council to connect with the community and develop relationships?

- Community outreach, partnerships, and open to the public Council meetings.
- Knowledgeable RPC members that are members of the community
- Networking of RPC members and coordinators
- Establishment of external partnerships, such as with city and other local government officials
- Issuing flyers, surveys and involvement with groups like community food banks

Consensus: *Respondents overall stated that open public meetings and the networking of the RPC members have significantly helped with connecting with the community. Having RPC members that are active members of the community has also enhanced the process of community outreach activities.*

29. What have you learned through your participation in the Regional Partnership council that would help other Regional Councils as they move forward with their work this year?

- To minimize priorities, sharpen strategic focus, and expect limitations.

- To keep focused, be patient, and be willing to slow down and reflect on mission and objectives.
- The importance of maintaining open communications by listening and respecting others' opinions and expertise.
- Allow more time for development and completion of goals and objectives.
- Set clear expectations and be persistent by asking questions and following up on unclear directions.
- Members need to maintain active participation and follow through on commitment to RPC development and activities.
- Need a clear explanation of conflict of interest.
- Members should attend at least one state board meeting annually to see how FTF operates and how all the pieces fit together.

Consensus: *Respondents stated that open communication is the best way for councils to productively move forward as long as they keep a sharp focus on the outcomes they need to achieve. In addition, maintaining a positive outlook and active participation at meetings was also recommended. A major concern was that open meeting regulations sometime hamper the development process.*

30. What changes are needed, if any, to improve the process for awarding grants?

- Simplify instructions and application forms for responding to RFGA.
- Clearer standards for development of the scope of work.
- After RFGA is awarded provide an analysis of how the scope of work maps back to the strategy and give the council the opportunity to request subsequent year modifications.
- Ensure grants are written correctly the first time so applicants do not have to add items later. Information needs to be submitted at the time of application without restrictions.
- Improving the process to respond to participants regarding why their proposals were not accepted.
- Including council input so the RFGA represents intent of the council.

- Timeframe rushed; timeframe from announcement to due date should be increased and the time between the announcement and implementation must be improved so grantees can effectively and timely begin working the grant award
- Shorten RFGA process and simplify for smaller organizations; eliminate repetitiveness. The current process seems tailored to larger groups who have experience.
- Increased media coverage around awards of grant money so taxpayers know the money awarded is being distributed. Many people still don't know who we are and what we do.
- Consider options other than the RFGA.
- Create a response system that involves an "in writing" response to applicants.
- The process works fine for us.
- Need to work on confidentiality.
- Incorporate consent agendas to approve grants.

Consensus: *There were many different responses to this question. Overall the changes recommended to improve the process for awarding grants were; simplifying and shortening the RFGA process, initiating clear standards for developing scope of work, refining the response process to applicants, and confidentiality issues.*

31. Do you have recommendations for the State Board about how best to work with local Regional Partnership Councils?

- Increase communication and information sharing
- Cohesiveness in achieving strategic goals
- No complaints
- Increase training sessions for local councils
- Increase State Board participation at regional meetings
- State Board needs to stay out of functioning councils and focus on the non functioning councils.
- Decrease micromanaging from main office, increase leadership responsibilities at the local level.
- Increase community involvement

- Share FTF successes across the state

Consensus: *The number one recommendation was to increase communication without necessarily identifying how. Other recommendations included: visits by the board to RPC meetings, increase board presence at regional/tribal community events, and to have a listening approach to council issues and concerns.*

32. What training opportunities do you suggest to further develop the skills and expertise of your Regional Coordinator to support the Regional council work?

- Offer webinars on everything pertinent to council functions such as:
 - Member responsibility
 - Council leadership responsibilities
 - FTF responsibilities
 - Open meeting laws
 - Community outreach
 - Communications and media relations
 - Explanation of council initiatives
- Training in procurement code and conflict of interest
- Advocacy training
- Increased opportunities to attend meetings and conferences related to the work of the council
- Training to assist bidders in filling the gaps in applications for their funding
- Overall leadership skill training and time management
- How to write RFGA's and processes
- Governance training
- Training on cultural competency and awareness
- Reinstate the FTF summit
- Training on grant processes

- Conduct system building workshops

Consensus: *The most recommended training for regional coordinators was for RFGA processes and open meeting law. Many respondents felt their coordinators were very knowledgeable and competent and required no additional training. Webinars were suggested as a great way to provide training to staff as well as creating an online library on our FTF website.*